

Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club WIRELESS



FROM THE TOP OF THE HILL

So far, I have the following members for new name tags.

Bill KJ6EIG, Scott, KJ6QIQ, Dick, KF6FZM, Gordon, W6DDU, Tom, KJ6UMG, Desmond, KI6DPZ, and Modesto, KJ6JNU.

Let me know if I missed anyone or if you want different names.

I talked last month about trying out new things to do in Amateur Radio. If you have an iPhone, download an APP called Echolink. This turns the iPhone into a link to repeaters all around the world. Give it a try.

San, N7PIB, Alan, K6KLL, and I helped out the the Hamilton Wireless club's VE session. One ex-ham passed all three tests, that's Technician through Extra.

This month's meeting will be held on Feb. 20th at McDougale Hall on the Sonoma Developmental Center.

Hope to see you all there.

—73, Jim, K6UUW



VOMARC AT KIDS DAY

Frank, KG6N and Jim, K6UUW, operating W6AJF at Kids Day.

This event occurs every month at Sonoma Skypark. Kids get to ride in a vintage airplane free.

Our Yaesu FT-950 is feeding an R-7 vertical mounted on the second floor of the building behind.

Frank had a good day, working 3D2RO, Rotuma, 6W/HA0NAR, Senegal, ZK3T, Tokelau, and 6Y5AE, Jamaica, all on CW.

I worked AF1T in New Hampshire. He was curious on how we got our call. He knew Frank Jones and had worked him. He also had several of Frank's books.

Anyone interested in coming out, it's on the second Sunday of each month except December.

February Meeting

Wed, Feb 20 McDougal Hall

Presenter: Darrel WD6BOR

Topic: Setting Antenna Poles and using a Multimeter

Minutes January 16, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 7:36 by President Jim K6UUW. The following members were in attendance: Jim K6UUW, Stan NJ6E, Scott, KJ6QIQ, Ed W1EJ, Eileen KG6QNT, Dick KF6FZM, Frank KG6N, Bill KJ6EIG, Darrel WD6BOR, San N7PIB, Alan K6KLL, Desmond KJ6DPZ. We had one guest: Dick W1USO.

Treasurer's Report: We have a balance of \$2,707.38 with \$225 owed for Hamfest.

Dues are due for the new year.

ACS:

ACS members need to meet with Jim Goodman AL2N on Monday, February 4 at 7pm to have new pictures taken for their ID tags.

Ken has sent out the current roster as well as the Net Control assignments. If you are unable to serve as NCS for the month you are assigned, it is up to you to trade with another member.

VOMARC NCS Assignments: Scott KJ6QIQ agreed to finish up January. Stan NJ6E volunteered for March, Bill KJ6EIG for July, and Craig KF6QZP was volunteered for August.

Old Business:

We have a VE Session on Saturday, January 26, 10am at McDougal Hall.

VE Session at Bodega Bay: Jim, Alan and San assisted Steve Hertzberg on Saturday, January 12. Sixteen people took 18 tests. Results: 9 Technicians and 1 Extra.

New Business:

VE Sessions for the year:

January 26, April 27 (Hamfest) and September 28.

Field Day is June 22-23. We will be setting up at Sonoma Sky Park.

Young Eagles: next date is February 10.

Adopt a Meeting: The new plan is to have members sign up to do a presentation on a subject of interest at our regular meetings. Frank took the lead for January, Scott will

demonstrate build a VHF antenna in June and Ken will be the presenter in July.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19.

Respectfully submitted,
Eileen KG6QNT,

PRESENTATION:

Frank demonstrated various internet resources of interest to Ham Radio operators:

- 1) QRZ.com, sort of like Facebook for Hams. You can set up your own personal page and it is free.
- 2) You Tube: there are thousands of videos for hams.
- 3) Club Log: useful for logging DX contacts and it is also free.

On Call—ACS News

—Ken N6KM, Unit Leader

A crowd of over 20 ACS members and interested parties attended a meeting for ACS at the City of Sonoma EOC Monday night, the 4th of February.

A major reason for the meeting was to get new photos taken of members and those applying to become members. These new photos will be incorporated into the new state-of-the-art ID cards to be issued to Sonoma County volunteers. The cards will make use of holographic images to provide added protection against counterfeit cards.

Jim Goodman, ACSCRO, and his XYL, Janice, attended. Jan did the photo work and Jim presented an update on ACS and developments. There will be a new FOG (Field Operations Guide) produced for all communications aspects of Sonoma County emergency operations. It is planned to be completed this summer. Jim also discussed the AUXCOM concept of having all agencies with an interest in emergency communications working together. This would involve Civil Air Patrol, Red Cross, Salvation Army and others beside ACS.

Among those attending were the following who are interested in joining ACS: Gordon, W6DDU; Mo, KI6JNU; Scott, KJ6QIQ; Victor,

KI6HID; Eric. KB6YNO; and Bill, KJ6EIG.

Three of these candidates will join the S.V. unit while two will join the South County unit. We look forward to welcoming them into the ranks soon.

CLUB COMMISSION PROGRAM

VOMARC is an affiliated club and as such we can receive a commission for every new ARRL membership and renewal we submit on behalf of our members.

Clubs retain \$15.00 for each new membership or lapsed membership (two years or more).

Clubs retain \$2.00 for each renewal.

So, if you are not an ARRL member, this a good opportunity to receive all the benefits of membership and help the club financially.

—Jim, K6UUW

NEW FIELD DAY RULES

New for 2013: Stations operating as Class A or B may begin setting up at 0000 UTC on Friday (which will be Thursday 8 PM EDT, 7 PM CDT, 6 PM MDT and 5 PM PDT). The groups may start and stop their set-up, resuming the set-up later, but may spend only a maximum of 24 hours cumulative time for setting up their sites. (ARRL Newsletter)

—submitted by Jim K6UUW

Morse Training

A new Morse training program called [Morsefusion](#) takes a novel path to learning the world's first digital communications mode. Sending books as a stream of characters that adjusts to your abilities is a fun way to learn Morse and enjoy some literature at the same time. Once you get started, you'll have *Great Expectations*, for sure! (Thanks, Blaine KØNE) (From ARRL Contest bulletin)

—submitted by Jim K6UUW

Not your Grandmother's 15M beam

In place of the usual Conversation feuilleton, I am relating a truly amazing accomplishment.

Tonno ES5TV has been putting up bigger and bigger antennas every year and recently completed construction of an 8-antenna "H-frame" array - two side-by-side 4-high stacks of 5-element [Optibeam](#) OB5-15 Yagis separated by 12 meters horizontally and 14 meters vertically. The highest antenna in each stack is 64 meters above the ground. Does the array make its own band openings? Well, just about!

We'll start with this high-resolution [video](#) of the tower erection put together by ES5PC. The video also includes the very first QSO with the new stack - it's with Paul K8PO, whose station is near Portland, Maine. The delicate music at the start gives way to more energetic accompaniment later on. (A [photo gallery](#) is also available.)

—submitted by Jim K6UUW

NEW IRC

The Universal Postal Union has introduced the newest model of the International Reply Coupon (IRC): The Doha model -- so named for the 25th Universal Postal Congress that took place in Doha, Qatar in October 2012 -- will replace the current model, known as the Nairobi model. Although the US Postal Service no longer sells IRCs, they are still available in other countries and post offices in the US are mandated to redeem them. The Doha model IRC will be available for purchase on July 1, 2013. It is valid for exchange until the end of 2017. The Nairobi model remains valid until December 31, 2013. (from ARRL bulletin)

—submitted by Jim K6UUW

How Do You Choose an Antenna Analyzer?

—Dan KB6NU

A reader recently e-mailed me:

"In the past you told me you started with the Autek RF-1, and later moved to the Palstar ZM-30. I am finally getting around to thinking about purchasing an antenna analyzer, but I am stumped by the choices. In order of increasing purchase price this is what I've turned up:

- * Autek RF-1 - \$139.95
- * Autek RF-5 - \$229.95
- * Rig Expert AA-54 – \$340.00
- * Palstar ZM-30 \$399.99
- * W4RT Electronics MiniVNA \$399.99
- * Rig Expert AA-230PRO \$690.00
- * Timewave Technology TZ-900S \$899.99

"How does one decide? Where does one go to find out the differences? Other than asking a fellow ham, how does one find out which one is the best antenna analyzer without paying an arm and a leg (unless the feature(s) so purchased are deemed worth the cost)?

"Thanks! 73"

When I replied, I noted that he had actually missed several other good choices:

- * Autek VA1 – \$199.
- * MFJ 259B - \$240.
- * YouKits FG-01 – \$250.
- * Comet CAA500 – \$450.

The Autek VA1 is actually the antenna analyzer that I first purchased. The MFJ 259B is arguably the most popular antenna analyzer on the market. MFJ has several other models with different feature sets. The YouKits FG-01 is a very cute, little analyzer with a small graphical display. It is made in China and sold in the U.S. by TenTec.

So, how do you choose just one from this list? Well, I think the first thing that you have to ask yourself is how you're going to use the analyzer. If all you're going to do is to check the SWR of your HF dipoles, then buy the Autek RF-1. It's the least expensive unit, is reasonably accurate, and is small and lightweight, making it easy to use outside where your antennas are located.

If you want to do some more serious frequency analysis, then you should be looking at the W4RT miniVNA or, if you have more cash, the Timewave TZ-900s. These instruments can help you do a lot more in-depth analysis of your antenna system. The software for the miniVNA, for example, will easily plot the SWR of a multi-band vertical antenna from 3 – 33 MHz.

Some antenna analyzers do more than just SWR. For example, what sold me first on the

Autek VA1 and then on the Palstar was that they also measured reactance. So, you can use the antenna analyzer as an LC meter as well. Palstar also says that you can use the ZM-3 as a low-level signal source. While I have used my Palstar to measure inductance and capacitance, I have yet to use it as a signal source.

Next, you need to consider what bands you'll be using it on. Many antenna analyzers only cover the HF bands. That's a bummer if you like operating 6m, or like to experiment with VHF/UHF antennas. A friend of mine bought the Palstar antenna analyzer after talking to the company at Dayton. At the time, they said that they were planning to come out with a model that covered 6m, as well as the HF bands.

Unfortunately, they never did come out with a 6m version, and he was sorely disappointed. He ended up buying a miniVNA instead. The miniVNA can be used up to 170 MHz right out of the box, and up to 1.5 GHz with an optional extender.

Asking your fellow hams about the antenna analyzers they have is actually a good way to figure out what's best for you. If you ask nicely, they might even let you borrow their analyzers or come over and show you how it works on your antennas.

Reading the reviews on eHam is also a good way to gather information before making a purchase like this. You certainly have to take the reviews there with a grain of salt, but if several reviewers mention a particularly good or particularly bad feature of a product, then it's certainly something worth taking a hard look at.

If you're new to the hobby, starting out small and working your way up might be a good strategy. You could buy one of the less expensive models and get used to how they work, then sell it and make the leap to a more sophisticated unit. The way things are going, you should be able to sell your first antenna analyzer for at least 80% of what you paid for it.

The March 2012 QST contains an in-depth review of four analyzers (available online to ARRL members), including the Comet CAA-

500, MFJ-266, RigExpert AA-54, and the Youkits FG-01. Each analyzer reviewed had various plusses and minuses. Even if the unit you are considering was not reviewed, the article provides a guide to the kinds of questions you should be asking as you go through the selection process.

When he's not analyzing antennas, Dan, KB6NU blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com, writes and publishes the "No-Nonsense" series of amateur radio license study guides, and just has fun with amateur radio. You can reach him by e-mail at cwgeek@kb6nu.com, @kb6nu on Twitter, or on 40m CW many evenings.

2013 ACS Net Control Assignments

	Name	Call
JANUARY	EILEEN	KG6QNT
FEBRUARY	JIM	K6UUW
MARCH	KEN	N6KM
APRIL	MARTY	KI6RTP
MAY	RACHEL	KI6HDG
JUNE	GEORGE	K6ITE
JULY	CRAIG	KF6QZP
AUGUST	DEAN	KI6FFM
SEPTEMBER	SAM	W5LTP
OCTOBER	DICK	KF6FZM
NOVEMBER	MIKE	WB6TMH
DECEMBER	DARREL	WD6BOR

2013 VOMARC Net Control Assignments

	Name	Call
JANUARY	SCOTT	KJ6QIQ
FEBRUARY	JIM	K6UUW
MARCH	STAN	NJ6E
APRIL	DAVE	KG6FIL
MAY	FRANK	KG6N
JUNE	ED	W1EJ
JULY	BILL	KJ6EIG
AUGUST	CRAIG	KF6QZP
SEPTEMBER	SAM	W5LTP
OCTOBER	DICK	KF6FZM
NOVEMBER	MIKE	WB6TMH
DECEMBER	DARREL	WD6BOR

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Frank C. Jones – W6AJF
Honorary President in Perpetuity

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Jim Hill, K6UUW – President, Training Officer

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Dave Dammuller KD6FIL – Secretary

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Mike Miller, WB6TMH – Radio Officer

Ken McTaggart, N6KM – ACS Unit Leader

Sanford Smith, N7PIB – VE Liaison

Jim Hill, K6UUW – Elmer Coordinator

Ken McTaggart, N6KM – Station Trustee for W6AJF

Eileen Adams, KG6QNT – Webmeistress, Editor

Receipt of the Wireless is one of the most sought after benefits of membership in VOMARC—S. Marler.

CLUB MEETINGS are held on the third Wednesday of each month at McDougal Hall at the Sonoma Developmental Center, Eldridge or the Sonoma Fire Station on 2nd St West. Meetings start at 19:30 local (7:30 P.M.).

WEB PAGE: <http://www.vomarc.org/>

Nets are held every Wednesday night at 19:30 (7:30 P.M.) local, except meeting nights on the 145.350 repeater, -600 kHz, PL 88.5 Hz.

ACS holds a net each Monday evening at 19:30 local on the 146.205, +600, PL 88.5 Hz repeater.

PACKET STATION INFO: The VOMARC packet station is off the air until further notice.

CLUB BREAKFASTS are held on the first Saturday of each month at Palms Grill (formerly Issa's) Restaurant, 18999 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma. The fun starts at 09:30 local.

Comments and submissions of material may be sent to:

Eileen@vom.com

Valley of the Moon ARC, Inc.

c/o Sonoma Police Department
175 First Street West
Sonoma, CA 95476

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**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE Wed, FEBRUARY 20, 7:30pm at McDougal Hall, at the Sonoma
Developmental Center in Eldridge**

SEE YOU THERE.

VOMARC MEMBERSHIP

VOMARC 2013 Membership Dues: \$15/year individual; \$5/year family member.

VOMARC encourages its members to join the ARRL. More information is available at www.arrl.org.
QST is available to blind and physically handicapped individuals on audio cassette from the Library of Congress, National
Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Call 1-800-424-8567.

Name: _____ CALL: _____ EMAIL: _____

Address: _____ APT: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Name: _____ CALL: _____ EMAIL: _____

Name: _____ CALL: _____ EMAIL: _____

VOMARC: \$ _____ Complimentary with Class--Date: _____

Membership Moment, From the Database Queen

Dues may be mailed to Desmond KI6DZP, 416 Claudia Dr, Sonoma, CA 95476, or brought to the next meeting.
Your check should be made payable to: **VOMARC**.